

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20508**

USTR PRESS RELEASES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE USTR HOME PAGE AT WWW.USTR.GOV.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 12, 2000**

**00 -29
CONTACT: BRENDAN DALY
AMY STILWELL
TODD GLASS
(202) 395-3230**

**USTR and Department of Commerce Seek Public Input
on Enhancement of Trade Advisory Committee System**

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the Department of Commerce yesterday published a notice in the *Federal Register* seeking comments from the public on changes to the advisory committee system that would help to ensure that the Administration obtains timely, relevant trade policy advice from consumer, environmental, labor, and other non-governmental organizations.

“The Clinton Administration solicits advice regarding trade policy from interested groups and organizations in a number of ways,” said Ambassador Barshefsky. “This *Federal Register* notice seeks views from the public on ways to further enhance the effectiveness of our efforts to obtain advice from non-governmental organizations on critical trade policy matters.”

Congress and the Administration have established a variety of advisory committees from which the Administration solicits and obtains advice on trade policy matters, including from environmental, labor, and consumer groups. Section 2155 of Title 19, U.S. Code, establishes a three-tier trade policy advisory committee system, with one committee addressing overall policy advice, several committees providing advice on more specific policy issues, and a larger number of committees covering sectoral, technical, or functional issues.

The Administration seeks trade policy advice from environmental, labor, consumer, and other groups through three advisory committees. Specifically, the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations (ACTPN) provides the President and USTR with broad advice on trade matters. ACTPN membership is drawn from chief executive officers of agriculture, consumer, environmental, industry, and labor groups. The President has also established a Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee (TEPAC), which primarily addresses trade and environment issues. TEPAC members are drawn from agriculture, consumer, environmental, industry, and labor groups, and from non-federal governments. A Labor Advisory Committee (LAC) provides advice on trade issues and labor. The LAC is administered by the Department of

Labor and is composed exclusively of labor union representatives.

Earlier this year, Ambassador Barshefsky sought advice from all 33 statutory trade advisory committees on how to improve the advisory system. She also asked the Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee to review the current trade advisory system to determine whether it “is presently functioning in a manner consistent with Congressional intent.”

The Administration seeks trade policy advice on environmental, labor, consumer, and other issues in other ways as well. For example, in formulating specific U.S. objectives in major trade negotiations, USTR routinely solicits written comments from the public, consults with interested constituencies, holds public hearings, and meets with a broad spectrum of non-governmental groups at their request.